

GENERATING REVENUE FOR THE USE OF SOFTGOODS THAT ARE FREELY DISTRIBUTED OVER A NETWORK

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 An on-line electronic commerce transaction for facilitating purchase of
digital products (softgoods) after enabling a user to preview the softgoods.
Creators of the softgoods enter into an agreement with an e-commerce agency in
which the agency agrees to handle sales of the softgoods and to return a portion of
the revenue to the creators. Creators are provided with a softgood authoring tool
that automates the softgood creation process. Before the softgoods are distributed,
10 a unique identifier is included in the softgood by this authoring tool. To play a
softgood, a prospective purchaser downloads or otherwise acquires a player
program. The player program enables a prospective purchaser a limited preview
of each softgood. If a user decides to purchase a softgood, the player program
communicates with the e-commerce agency over the Internet to facilitate the
15 purchase transaction. During this transaction, the prospective purchaser is
prompted to enter a financial account number. The player program encrypts this
account number and other data transmitted to the e-commerce server, unless the
prospective purchaser's credit card information and other personal data are already
stored in a database maintained by the e-commerce server. The validity of the
20 credit transaction is confirmed with an appropriate approval agency, and if
approved, a registration value is provided to the player program for use in
registering the softgood on the user's computer. If the softgood has not been
purchased and registered on the user's computer, it will not be played by the
player program beyond the permitted preview.

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